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## **Inclusion in Today's Society**

Expanding opportunities for people with disabilities is becoming a goal all across our nation. In the town of Columbia, Missouri, there have been a number of programs started to help get disabled individuals active in sports and other activities. Two of these programs are the Challenger League at Daniel Boone Little League and Cedar Creek Therapeutic Riding Center. Both of these programs involve helping disabled children and adults be able to do what people without disabilities can do easily.

The Challenger League at Daniel Boone Little League helps children with disabilities become involved in the sport of baseball. This league allows kids from ages five to eighteen to get active no matter what their disability may be, physical or developmental. These children are paired up with a volunteer who provides assistance to their "buddy player". The volunteers help do anything from batting to running bases to fielding and throwing. The participants, both players and helpers, have a blast while playing the game of baseball. The smiles that come from these kids after getting a big hit or making a big out are priceless. It is activities like these that help include people with disabilities in our community.

Another program that helps include people with disabilities in the community is Cedar Creek Therapeutic Riding Center. This program allows disabled people of all ages to be able to ride horses. While people are enjoying being with the horses, it is improving their overall balance, strength, and coordination. Cedar Creek helps teach proper care of the horses, riding skills, and enables the experience to be enjoyable at the same time. Like

the Challenger League, Cedar Creek also uses the help of many volunteers. The volunteers are also benefitting from these programs. They learn from working with and being around people with disabilities. Cedar Creek Therapeutic Riding Center is one of the many programs in Columbia that is helping disabled children and adults become active in the surrounding community.

People with disabilities have come a long way over the years as far as being included in our society. It is programs like the Challenger League and Cedar Creek that continue to involve disabled people. More communities should start programs like these to help the development of the disabled. Hopefully, even more participants and volunteers will become involved in programs like these around Columbia as well as all over the world.